

Teague and the Poor

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Food Stamp Folly

After an arduous passage through a House-Senate conference, the Food Stamp bill has again reached the House floor. Several weeks ago the House in response to the spirited leadership of Representative Sullivan,

An amendment to the Federal Food Stamp Act introduced by Representative Charles M. Teague of the 13th Congressional District prompted the New York Times to attack Teague on its editorial page last month.

Stanley K. Sheinbaum, Democratic candidate for Congress, added his own objections to the move by Teague. "It's not enough to call Teague's amendment a 'clumsy attempt' to discriminate against certain segments of our society," he said.

"It must also be noted that this amendment comes from a man who calls himself a conservative opposed to unnecessary interference in the lives of citizens."

"Yet it is very often these same 'conservatives' like the incumbent Congressman who are the first ones to impose federal coercions on minority political and economic groups who do not happen to agree with majority opinion."

"In this case Teague's personal dislikes would have denied federally sanctioned aid to the very groups who qualify most for the surplus food--grape pickers who are attempting to secure the same rights to bargain for wages other workers now enjoy, and students who sometimes live under subsistence conditions."

"One wonders just who is intended to receive the aid if not the hungry," Sheinbaum said.

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Democrat of Missouri, voted to authorize the Food Stamp Program for four years in contrast to the one-year extension approved by the Senate. The conferees compromised on two and one-half years and authorized a substantial increase in the level of spending.

This compromise should be accepted as a reasonable though not ideal achievement in the battle against totally unnecessary hunger in this country. But when the bill comes to a final vote today, Representative Teague, Republican of California, proposes to send the bill back to committee with instructions to add an amendment barring food stamps for strikers and college students. This is a clumsy attempt to hit at the grape strikers in California and at college radicals and "hippies."

Since individuals have to be virtually destitute to qualify for food stamps, this amendment would fall harshly on the relatively few people it affected. When did it become the American practice to win social or economic conflicts by imposing starvation on one's adversaries? This ugly amendment has no place in the Food Stamp bill.